

# Department of Auditor-Controller

## Children's Group Home Ombudsman Activity Report

### September 2013

Total Calls	<u>15</u>	General Statistics	
Calls returned within one business day	<u>15</u>	Youth Callers	Time of Youth Calls
Calls resolved within 30 business days	<u>15</u>	Female <u>8</u>	AM <u>3</u>
Follow-up calls	<u>34</u>	Male <u>3</u>	PM <u>8</u>
		Total Youth Callers <u>11</u>	
		Total Adult Callers <u>4</u>	

#### **CALLS RELATING TO:**

#### **Collaboration Contacts/Referrals/Information**

DCFS	<u>5</u>
Group Home	<u>2</u>
Dept. of Mental Health	<u>2</u>
Orange County Children Services	<u>1</u>
Probation Ombudsman	<u>1</u>
General Information	<u>5</u>
Community Care Licensing	<u>1</u>

TOTAL: 17 (Note: A call may have multiple contacts/referrals)

#### **Personal Rights**

<u>        </u> Allowance	<u>        </u> 1 Health/Med, Dental, Psych Care (Project 6)
<u>        </u> Clothing/Personal Property	<u>        </u> Respect
<u>        </u> Contact	<u>        </u> School/Community/Religious Svcs
<u>        </u> Food	<u>        </u> Work/Job Skills
<u>        </u> 1 Living Condition (Rosemary's)	

TOTAL: 2

#### **Personal**

<u>        </u> Crime/Gang-related	<u>        </u> Physical Abuse/Harm
<u>        </u> 1 Discipline (Rosemary's)	<u>        </u> 1 Fear, Threats, Intimidation, Isolation (McKinley)
<u>        </u> Discrimination	<u>        </u> Relationship
<u>        </u> Emotional Issues	<u>        </u> Sexual Interaction
<u>        </u> Pregnancy/Infant Care	<u>        </u> Substance Abuse
	<u>        </u> Neglect

TOTAL: 2

#### **Other**

<u>        </u> 3 CSW Related Issues	(David & Margaret (2), Penny Lane)
<u>        </u> 1 Sibling Separation Concern	(Rosemary's)

TOTAL: 4

#### **Visits/Outreach**

Luvlee's Residential Care/New Dawn (2 sites)	Issues/Questions expressed during visits
Heritage Group Homes (2 sites)	<u>        </u> 1 ILP Coordinator contact
Leroy Haynes	<u>        </u> 1 Information on Rights and Copy of Court Report
Bright Horizon/Garces	<u>        </u> 1 Discipline
Rosemary Children's Services (5 sites)	<u>        </u> 1 Intimidation
Mary's Shelter (2 sites)	<u>        </u> 3 CSW issues
	<u>        </u> 1 Attorney contact
	<u>        </u> 1 Job information
TOTAL: <u>13 sites</u>	

**SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION MEETING**  
**October 16, 2013**  
**Reporting for the month of September 2013**

**AWOLs:** There were 124 AWOLs involving 112 youth: 12 youth AWOL'd more than once, with some AWOL'ing up to 3 times in this same month.

48 remain AWOL	2 HOP
49 returned to GH	2 CCP
10 are in JH	1 Terminated

**Outstanding AWOL detainments from previous months and arrests in September 2013:**

8 youth were arrested / detained in September. 2 are currently in JH, 3 are in a GH, 1 is in Camp, and 1 is HOP and 1 is terminated.

**Statistics and Findings regarding AWOLs in September 2013**

- 1) Over 54% of the AWOL incidents were Hispanic males with a mean age of 16.9 years. The second largest population of AWOL'd youth during the month of September were black males with a mean age of 16.3. The overall average age of youth who AWOL'd in September was 16.6 years.

*Recommendation:*

- For the past 14 months, the average age and majority race of AWOL'd youth remained about the same. Therefore, for all 13 months, Hispanic males above the age of 16 were around 40% to 50% of AWOL incidents. This statistic may likely be a representation of the general population of LA County. Even if that is a fact, it still means this is the population that Probation needs to work with to decrease AWOLs. DPOs, Therapists, or other GH and County staff, should interview at-risk youth (mainly Hispanic males around the age of 16) to find out about certain feelings related to age, gender, or cultural stresses and consider possible solutions to decrease these feelings/stresses.
  - Make DPOs and GH staff aware of the demographics that are at most risk of AWOLing. Research and identify possible methods or daily practices of assisting youth to come to a less stressful state of mind.
- 2) The quicker the GH notifies Probation staff of the AWOL, the faster Probation can begin the steps necessary to detain the youth. For the month of September, all the GHs were compliant with notifying Probation about the AWOL'd youth within the required time frame.

*Recommendation:*

- In the last 3 months, the GHs have shown an improvement in timeliness and consistency with regards to AWOL reporting.
- Reiterate to GH staff and to legal guardians of youth the importance of reporting an AWOL as soon as the incident occurs. Specifically, all AWOLs should be reported within 24 hours in order to expedite the

issuance of a bench warrant and the recovery of the youth. Statistics should be shared with GH staff to illustrate the real results of delayed reporting.

- 3) As with previous months, certain GHs showed a higher percentage of AWOLs than other GHs. This was determined by taking the number of AWOLs for that month and comparing it to the number of beds available in the GH (population). It is important to note that youth who AWOL'd more than once in the same GH were only counted as 1 AWOL. For September 2013, 8 GHs had a 30% or higher AWOL rate. 3 of those GHs had an AWOL rate of 50% or higher.

*Recommendation:*

- Continue to track the frequency of AWOLs for each GH and see if a consistent pattern remains amongst the same group homes. At this point, certain GHs have shown to have a consistently high number of AWOLs.
  - Several confounding factors have to be controlled to identify a direct correlation between GH treatment of youth and AWOLs. For example, a high AWOL rate for a GH could only mean that that particular GH gets higher risk youth.
  - Investigate GHs that have an unusually high number of AWOLs compared to other GHs to see possible reasons.
  - Interview youth during investigation.
  - Create a plan of action based on results (directives for GH, staff training, etc).
  - Monitor GH to see if trend has stopped after implementation of programs or directives.
- 4) During the month of September, there was a positive correlation detected between bench warrant requests and timely bench warrant issuance and effect on youth detainment. As in, the longer time it took to issue the bench warrant, the less likely it was for the youth to be detained that same month:

*Recommendation:*

- Regardless of strong or weak correlations, consider the importance of having a bench warrant issued as soon as possible for an AWOL'd youth. Overall, the sooner a bench warrant is issued, the more likely it is that the youth will be detained by the end of the month (as several previous months' data has shown).

**Final Remarks on AWOLs:** Similar to last month, all 'insignificant' AWOLs were also incorporated into the data this month (i.e. youth AWOL'ing for an hour). Certain trends relating to race, age, and sex continued to mirror the previous months' data.

**iTrack (SIRs)-**

There were **NO** child deaths or suicide attempts reported for the month of September 2013 reported in iTrack. The largest category for SIRs continued to be "other", providing no description of the type of incident the youth was involved in.

*Recommendation:*

- Instruct all iTrack users to NOT select the category "other," unless incident undeniably does not belong under any specific category. Another option is to remove the category "other," and instead add additional specific categories (once it is determined why users are selecting "other"). Probation is currently discussing improvement ideas regarding iTrack with ISD software managers.

**GROUP HOME MONITORING AND INVESTIGATIONS:**

**Current:**

No Group Homes are currently on any HOLD Status.

**Child Abuse**, we had **6** referrals, of which 4 were **Unfounded**, 1 was **Substantiated** for General Neglect and 1 is Pending.

**Pacific Lodge-** youth alleged that a Group Home staff sexually violated him. Youth alleged that the staff grabbed his hand that was holding his penis while he was urinating in order to make him stop urinating for a drug test. Allegation was **Unfounded** for Sexual Abuse.

**Aiming High (Site I)-** Youth was replaced at Boys Republic and staff caller reported a burn mark on the youth that occurred while the youth was placed at Aiming High. Allegation for Physical Abuse was **Unfounded**.

**Leroy Haynes-** Youth alleged that he saw two other youth engage in oral sex at the Group Home. Allegation for General Neglect was **Substantiated**.

**Rosemary's (Green site)-** Youth's mother reported that her daughter was severely beaten by a 300 pound youth and she suffered serious injuries. Allegation is **Pending**.

**Aiming High (Site II)-** Youth alleged emotional abuse against a staff at the Group Home. Youth alleged that the staff would belittle him and curse at him in Spanish. Allegation for Emotional Abuse was **Unfounded**.

**Penny Lane (Main)-** Youth made allegations in court against Group Home staff. Youth alleged that one staff hit her in the arm with an open fist and was verbally abusive towards her. Youth also alleged that the staff allow the youth to fight and do not separate them until after the fight is over. Allegations were **Unfounded**.

**Group Home Investigations:**

We had **6** Group Home investigations during the month of September 2013, **2** were **Unfounded**, 1 was **Inconclusive**, 1 was **Substantiated** and **2** are **Pending**.

**Trinity El Monte-** An anonymous male youth caller alleged to the County Ombudsman Line that that female staff at the Group Home dress inappropriately and one staff rubs up against him and sucks on her lollipop in a sexual manner in front of all the youth. Additionally, the youth alleged that the food is horrible and that the clothing brought in by the youth's parents is used as a behavior modification tool. Allegations were **Unfounded**.

**Penny Lane (Main)-** DPO reported that the youth at the Group Home are arriving to their MDT meetings wearing inappropriate clothing, i.e. short shorts and "wife beater" type tops. Allegation was **Inconclusive**.

**CAOF (Terry House)-** Group Home failed to notice that a youth sustained an injury to his face that required stitches the following day. Allegation was **Substantiated**.

**Loving Life (Site II)-** A youth was released directly from court to the Group Home. Allegation is that the Group Home failed to follow proper protocol. Allegation was **Unfounded**.

**Hathaway/Sycamores-** Youth alleged in court that he was physically assaulted by staff, burned with cigarettes and stabbed in the toe with a pocket knife. (\*This investigation turned into a Child Abuse SCAR in the month of October) Allegation is **Pending** and will be on the October 2013, SBC report with a finding in the Child Abuse section.

**Trinity Yucaipa-** Staff made an unauthorized/unscheduled stop at a Grocery store on the way to school with six youth. Two of the youth stole alcohol and threatened the Vons store clerk. Allegation is **Pending**.

#### **Monitoring:**

We have finished all Monitoring Reports for the 2012-2013, fiscal year, however; all reports have not been posted and remain in various stages of approval. The 2013-2014, Monitoring is underway.

#### **Permanency-**

We are in various stages of preparation for **3 potential adoptions** and **5 potential legal guardianships** by the end of the year or before.

In September 2013, we completed no Adoptions or Legal Guardianships; however, our next adoption is scheduled for November 7, 2013.